

## REMARKS

In response to the Examiner's Office Action dated January 28, 1997, applicants submit the instant response. Applicants believe that all the pending claims are now in condition for allowance and respectfully request reconsideration of the instant application in view of the aforementioned amendments and the following remarks. Currently, claims 1-16 are pending in the above-identified application.

The Examiner's objection to the title of the invention, and rejection under 35 U.S.C. §112 to claims 1 and 3 have been fully considered and appropriate changes have been made. No new matter has been introduced by this amendment.

According to the present invention, an image sensing apparatus provides and maintains an optimum exposure control for a subject based on an image signal in a designated zone selected by the zone selecting means (*e.g.*, two-dimensional position selecting circuit). The image sensing apparatus initially stores optimum control parameters in a memory when exposure control is optimized, and then retrieves these control parameters from the memory in correcting a noise (darkness) saturation. Thus, the image sensing apparatus maintains the optimum exposure control even when a photographer's visual axis (line-of-sight) gets out of the selected zone, because the control parameters are stored in the memory. In addition, a photographer, even when finding it difficult to adjust exposure by a small electronic viewfinder (claim 16), may obtain an optimum exposure control only by selecting a subject.

Claims 1-5, 7 and 8 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as being unpatentable over Shimizu et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,473,374) in view of Iwasaki (U.S. Patent No. 5,461,452).

Shimizu et al. is directed to an exposure apparatus which detects a gain of the iris 2, a shutter speed of the CCD image pickup device 3, and a gain amount of the AGC amplifier 4 and uses these detection results to control these elements 2-4, by comparing with a predetermined signal R a digital image pickup signal which has been generated from an output of the CCD 3. Hereupon, the signal R is generated by modulating a predetermined exposure reference signal supplied from the circuit 9 in accordance with the reference level modulation coefficient K which represents the brightness of the object.

Thus, Shimizu et al. discuss an exposure control which is quite different from the present invention, and teach neither to store optimum exposure control parameters for a selected zone nor to maintain the optimum exposure based upon them.

Iwasaki is directed to a visual axis detecting device 110 which detects a visual axis of a photographer, and a tracking device 155 which tracks a position which is near the position of object detected by device 110 and has approximate spectral characteristics. The exposure and focus are controlled by the tracking process. Iwasaki detects and keeps track of an object in the finder, but does not teach to store optimum exposure control parameters for a selected zone or to maintain the optimum exposure based upon them. Furthermore, if the photographer's visual axis gets out of the finder, the exposure and focus control cannot be maintained.

Thus, Simizu et al. and Iwasaki do not teach or suggest, either singularly or in combination, the subject matter of claims 1-5, 7 and 8. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that these claims are patentably distinguishable from Shimizu et al. and Iwasaki.

Claim 6 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as being unpatentable over Shimizu et al. in view of Iwasaki and in view of Shimizu (U.S. Patent No. 5,400,074).

Shimizu is directed to correcting a brightness attenuating characteristic of the zoom lens responsive to the position of a zoom lens, but does not teach to store the optimum exposure control parameters for a selected zone or to maintain the optimum exposure based upon them.

Thus, Simizu et al., Iwasaki, and Simizu do not teach or suggest, either singularly or in combination, the subject matter of claim 6. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that claim 6 is patentably distinguished from these references.

Claims 9, 10, 12, 14 and 15 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by Faltermeier et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,579,156). Claim 11 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103 as being unpatentable over Faltermeier et al. Claim 13 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103 as being unpatentable over Faltermeier et al. in view of Shimizu et al. Claim 16 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103 as being unpatentable over Faltermeier et al. in view of Arai et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,570,156).

Faltermeier et al. is directed to a focus control by the autofocus module 23 of the CCD camera 14, an exposure control by the exposure control 26, and a selection of image area (area position and area size) for exposure metering by the track ball 27c of the

control panel 27. However, this reference fails to teach storing optimum exposure control parameters for a selected zone or to maintain the optimum exposure based on them.

Thus, Applicants respectfully submit that claims 9-16 are patentably distinguished from the Faltermeier et al. and other cited references.

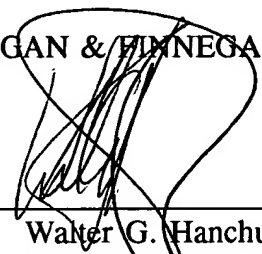
Applicants acknowledge the objections made to the drawings as noted in Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review. Applicants submit that correction to such drawing objections will be effected upon receipt of notice of allowable subject matter in the above-identified application.

Applicants respectfully submit that in view of the aforementioned amendments and remarks, the instant application is now in condition for allowance.

No extension of time is believed necessary for consideration of this response. However, in the event that an extension of time is necessary, such an extension is hereby petitioned. The Commissioner is also authorized to charge Deposit Account No. 13-4500, under No. 1232-4252 for any necessary fees. A duplicate copy of this sheet is attached.

Respectfully submitted,

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